

LUCY BELINDA HOLLEY

BABY: Born on the trail Oct. 19, 1856
 Hunt Wagon Company

Lucy's father, James Holley, was a carpenter. He was already a member of the Church when he went to board with the Ingram family in Birmingham. Here he met, fell in love with, and married Lucy Jane Ingram in 1852. A year later, James baptized Lucy over the protests of her parents. James and Lucy, with two children, Ann (3) and James H. (1), and another on the way, sailed from Liverpool to America on the *Enoch Train* in 1856. They joined the Hunt wagon company in Iowa City and from there traveled closely with the Martin handcart company. They were the last immigrants to leave Iowa City that year.

Lucy Belinda had two sets of aunts and uncles in the Hunt Company—Charles and Mary E. Holley, and Henry Cecil and Lucy Meadmore Holley. Aunt Lucy (Meadmore) died on Sept. 26, just three weeks before Lucy Belinda was born. The Hunt company journal does not record her death, but William Binder of the Martin Company recorded it briefly: “Sept. 26, Friday - Road very heavy, travelled 8 miles. Srs. Hartley and Holley died.” [Mary Hartle of Martin company and Lucy Meadmore Holley of Hunt company.] In later years when Uncle Henry Holley was asked about his first wife, he didn't want to talk about it and would only say, “I lost her coming to Utah” and would give no further details.

Charles, James and Henry Holley were 3 of 9 sons of John and Ann Cecil Holley, born in Orcop, Herefordshire, England. Their only sister, Ann, died as a child. Several generations of the Holley family had lived in the village of Orcop, in the beautiful green hills of Herefordshire, near the border of Wales. The childhood home of the Holley brothers was a small 2-room rock structure, painted white and constructed in an area dug out of the hillside, at a location called Cherry Hill. The home was added on to as the family grew and their father had more means. The Holley farm covered an area large enough to boast grass, cherry trees, corn and herds of cattle and hogs, all enclosed with a neatly clipped hedge. This home, referred to as “the cherry orchard farmhouse,” still stands today.

At Garway Hill, about 5 miles distant from Orcop, the boys' father, John Holley, owned a grocery store and butcher shop. He was an excellent butcher and grocer as well as a highly respected and influential member of the local community. His neighbors knew him as a man of unquestionable integrity and high moral character. The grocery store and butcher shop still stand as well, home to the local post office. John Holley also owned several cottages which he rented.

The Holley boys worked on their father's farm for most of their young years. Being schooled at home by their parents, all the boys were very literate. When Lucy's father James Holley was 13 years old he went to live with his older brother, William, in South Wales, where he worked for eight years in the coal or iron mines. At the age of 21 he went to work in construction for an uncle in Birmingham, England, and thus was a skilled carpenter at the time of his 1856 immigration.

The Holley family had belonged to the Church of England. The other two prevalent denominations in Herefordshire were the Wesleyan Methodist Church and a break-off group who called themselves the United Brethren. It was this group of United Brethren in their several congregations who responded wholeheartedly to Apostle Wilford Woodruff when he preached the gospel there in 1840. Elder Woodruff's missionary labors among the United Brethren resulted in the baptisms of all 600 of them except one, and included their 45 licensed ministers. During the eight months that Elder Woodruff labored in Herefordshire, he baptized over 1800 converts, including 200 preachers of various denominations in the area. Some of the branches of the Church were organized in Garway, Gadfield Elm, and Frome's Hill. The United Brethren's chapel at Gadfield Elm was turned over to Wilford Woodruff for the LDS Church and is still standing today.

(Lucy Belinda Holley - Page 2)

John Holley became acquainted with Wilford Woodruff during this time and attended many meetings where he preached. Elder Woodruff stayed at John Holley's home on at least two occasions. The Holley parents were likely baptized during this time. Years later in a letter from Ann Cecil Holley to her sons in America, she stated: "You wanted to know if I had left the Church. I wonder where I should go for salvation, but in the Church of Christ there is salvation, and no where else." Ann also reminded her sons to see that her temple work was accomplished and to "seal her up." The endowment and sealing of the Holley parents was accomplished in 1892.

As the spirit of gathering to Zion inspired the Holley family, John encouraged his sons, Charles, James and Henry, to emigrate. He helped to finance their way by mortgaging his farms. John Holley also helped support two other families in their emigration. The brother, William, remained in Wales where he prospered and was active in the Church until his death.

Henry and Lucy Meadmore Holley left England in 1855. Lucy was sad to leave behind her widowed mother whose name was also Lucy. From their arrival port in Philadelphia, Henry and Lucy traveled to St. Louis, Missouri. Lucy was expecting a baby and they decided to stay there until after the birth, which occurred on May 11, 1855. While visiting relatives later in Illinois, this little boy, William Meadmore Holley, became ill and died on January 9, 1856. He was buried at Cherry Grove, Albington, Illinois. Henry endured more heartache as tragedy struck again in the loss of his wife while crossing the plains. Charles Holley and his wife, Mary E., left England in 1854. James Holley, his expectant wife, Lucy Jane, and their two little children sailed in 1856. The three brothers and their families reunited in Iowa City and all traveled west with the Hunt Wagon Company.

Lucy Belinda was born on the plains on Sunday, October 19, 1856. This was the first day of the early storms that would strand the Hunt, Hodgett and Martin companies for over a week near the last crossing of the North Platte River before rescuers finally found them. Diarist John Jaques described October 19 as "a bitter cold day. Winter came on all at once, and that was the first day of it." Patience Loader of the Martin company wrote about October 28, the day that the first rescuers found the stranded companies: "These brethren had to go still further, to the Platte River [crossing] as the Hunt wagon company was still camped there and they were in great distress as their teams had given out and so many provisions were giving out." Lucy Belinda and all of her family survived these severe trials and finally arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in December. (There were seven baby girls born to mothers in the Hunt Company during their travels across the plains. Lucy Belinda Holley was the only infant who survived. See Mary Adelaide Walters, Hunt company section of *Tell My Story, Too*, for a summary overview.)

Uncle Henry soon settled in northern Weber County, remarried and had a large and faithful posterity. Charles and Mary returned to Illinois, disgruntled with the emigration experience and the Church. Family records say that Charles was a "constant complainer." He and Mary never had any children. Lucy Belinda's family settled in Springville where Lucy's mother missed the English gardens so much that she carried buckets of water long distances in order to water and care for her beloved flowers. She was talented in Home Arts and won First Place at the Chicago World's Fair for a tatted baby cap. James and Lucy eventually had twelve children. Lucy Belinda died in February 1858.

Sources: "Autobiography of William Lawrence Binder," Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files and LDS Church archives; Daughters of Utah Pioneer history files for Lucy Holley; "Quiet Strength: A biography of Henry Holley" compiled by Glen V. Holley, 1997, from source material gathered and preserved by the posterity of John Holley (1790), James Holley (1825) family records, and history of the community of Slaterville, Weber County, Utah. This biography is highly documented and footnoted, citing numerous official records; https://www.lds.org.uk/gadfield_elm_chapel.php.